The Poetry of Cao Zhi. Translated by Robert Joe Cutter. Library of Chinese Humanities Series. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2021. Pp. xl + 390. €34.95 hardcover.

The Poetry of Cao Zhi is one of three recent additions to the Library of Chinese Humanities, the two other titles being *Family Instructions for the Yan Clan and Other Works by Yan Zhitui (531–590s)* (translated by Xiaofei Tian) and *The Poetry of Meng Haoran* (translated by Paul W. Kroll), published the same year. According to the mission statement on the publisher's website, the books in this series present "important works in the pre-modern Chinese cultural tradition in accurate and readable English translation, side by side with a good edition of the original," free of charge for the use of "students, scholars, and readers worldwide." [1] Like most of the titles published so far, *The Poetry of Cao Zhi* is the work of a major literary scholar who is also a specialist in the study of the original author and his writings. In this particular case, we are additionally fortunate to have, in Robert Joe Cutter, a scholar who brings to this project a lifelong engagement with Cao Zhi 曹植 (192–232) and with the world of early medieval Chinese poetry.

The "poetry" in the title of this collection refers to Cao Zhi's compositions in two major genres, forty-four *fu* 賦 (variously rendered as "rhapsody" and "poetic exposition," as noted in the Introduction, and also, by earlier translators, as "rhymeprose," from the German *Reimprosa*), and eighty-four poems distributed between the closely related categories of *shi* 詩 (lyric poems) and *yuefu* 樂府 (poems with titles taken from songs originally collected by the Music Bureau) in different metres, but predominantly in the five-syllable form, of which Cao Zhi is generally recognized to be an early master, and by some as the greatest among the early masters.[2] Together, these compositions encompass the entire body of his poetic writings (everything else, including pieces in minor genres featuring extensive use of rhyme and metre, being traditionally grouped under prose).

Hitherto, most readers have come to know Cao Zhi through anthologies, but whether anthologized in Chinese or in translation, he has, with great consistency, been represented by selections taken from more or less the same assortment of pentasyllabic

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[1] De Gruyter, Library of Chinese Humanities: https://www.degruyter.com/serial/loch-b/html?lang=de, accessed 1 September 2022.

[2] Citations to Cao Zhi's poetic writings in this review are given using the numbers assigned by Cutter, according to the order in which in they appear in the edition he has chosen for his base text (see below). For example, "*Fu* on the Goddess of the Luo River," Cao Zhi's most famous composition in the *fu* form, is numbered 2.3, meaning the third piece in the second chapter, or *juan* 卷, of Cutter's base text.

shi and *yuefu* and, in the *fu* form, solely by his "*Fu* on the Goddess of the Luo River" ("Luoshen fu" 洛神賦 , 2.3).[3] Now, for the first time, readers around the world have all of his poems, even incomplete fragments and pieces of doubtful attribution, ranged before them in both English and Chinese. Lu You 陸游 (1125–1210) once said that the way to know a person is to read everything they ever wrote. Whether we choose to read this book from cover to cover, or to browse freely among its pages, we have in our hands the resources for getting to know, more fully and in the round, the poet Cao Zhi.[4]

Cutter has dedicated his book to David Knechtges, his mentor and forerunner in the translation of medieval Chinese literature, and true to Knechtges's example, Cutter's translations are faithful, almost to a fault, to the original texts. The textual and philological scholarship grounding these translations, of which there is a prodigious quantity, is only minimally reflected in the footnotes; these are just simple enough to be useful to a general reader, while more detailed notes are tucked into the back of the book for interested readers with the ability to digest them. The arrangement of the book follows Cutter's base text, the critical edition compiled by the Qing-dynasty scholar, Ding Yan 丁晏 (1794–1875),[5] which in turn follows earlier precedents: thus, by genre rather than chronological order, with *fu* coming first, then *shi* and *yuefu*.[6]

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[3] An assortment largely based on the editorial choices of the compilers of the *Wen xuan* 文選 and the *Yutai xinyong* 玉臺新詠 and hence reflecting the literary tastes and sensibilities of the princely courts of the Liang 梁 dynasty (502–557), so the Cao Zhi thus presented to the reader is, in a certain sense, a creation of the late Six Dynasties. I draw this inference from Stephen Owen's argument about how the canon of early Chinese poetry came to be formed. See his *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Asia Centre, 2006).

[4] Granted that there is much of uncertain attribution. The collection put together by imperial command soon after Cao Zhi's death was already lost by Tang times, and the extant collection consists of a core group of writings, preserved in the sixth-century anthologies mentioned above, around which accumulated other writings as they were reconstituted from Tang and Song compilations. In other words, to the extent that Cao Zhi as a writer can be known, we know him through sources dating from no earlier than the sixth century and in some cases as late as the eleventh century.

[5] Ding Yan, *Cao ji quanping* 曹集銓評 (1872; Beijing: Wenxue guji chubanshe, 1957, with emendations), see Cutter's critique of the available editions, pp. xxxv–xl.

[6] The convention of placing compositions in the *fu* form at the head of an individual writer's collection, once established by the makers of the *Wen xuan*, persisted long after the *fu* was overtaken, in importance and in sheer volume of output, by poetry in five and seven syllables. In Cao Zhi's day, however, the *fu* did take precedence over these newly emerging forms.

There is a serendipity in meeting Cao Zhi in his *fu* before one goes on to encounter him again on the stomping grounds of the *shi* and *yuefu*, where the reader may be more accustomed to seeing him. Cutter's translations are close and precise, and though tending at times to be too much so, they nevertheless manage to capture something of the beauty of the original works. With Cutter as our cicerone, we see in this Cao Zhi a figure more luminous and expansive, and considerably less fraught, than the one inhabiting the narrower and more complicated world of his five-syllable poems. This is because the domain of the *fu* is public, the mechanism of composition is that of performance,[7] and—especially in the case of the then relatively new subgenre known as "*fu* on objects" (*yongwu fu* 詠物賦)—the range of topics is extremely broad. It is in these "*fu* on objects," which though still in its formative stages was rapidly gaining popularity among the Jian'an 建安 poets,[8] that Cao Zhi sometimes appears in a jaunty, even frolicsome mood. Notable examples include the charming fragment "*Fu* on the Bat" ("Bianfu fu" 蝙蝠賦, 3.8) and the (likewise fragmentary) "*Fu* on Wine" ("Jiu fu" 酒賦, 3.10). In "*Fu* on a Wild Goose Who Encountered an Arrow Cord" ("Lijiao yan fu" 離繳雁賦, 3.6) and "*Fu* on the Sparrow Hawk and Sparrow" ("Yaoque fu" 鷂雀賦, 3.7), also a fragment, we hear the poet speak in an interesting diversity of voices.

Delightful as these *yongwu fu* may be, their authorship is so uncertain that, for taking a closer look at Cutter's style as a translator, it may be best to go to a piece that rests on firmer attribution. "*Fu* on the Goddess of the Luo River" is one such piece; as one of the pieces collected in the *Wen xuan*, it is as near as we can get in Cao Zhi's corpus to a stable and authentic text. It is also a masterpiece and Cao Zhi's signature work in this literary form, and as such has been translated more times than any of his other writings. In the English-speaking academy alone, such eminent scholars as David Knechtges, Paul Kroll, Stephen Owen, and Burton Watson have tackled it, to name

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[7] In early medieval times, the composition of *shi* and *yuefu* among the elite also had a strongly performative aspect that was linked to their social function—we are at this point still centuries removed from poetry that can be understood as pure lyric—but this was true to a lesser degree of *shi* and *yuefu* than it was of *fu*.

[8] Here taking Jian'an, the name of the last reign-era (196–220) of the last emperor, Xiandi 獻帝 (r. 189–220), of the Han dynasty (206 B.C.E. to 221 C.E.), in its broader sense of the literary-historical period extending from the beginning of the final reign-era of the Han (196) through the end of the first reign (226) of the Wei 魏 dynasty (220–266), a period in which Cao Cao 曹操 (155–220), Cao Pi 曹丕 (187–226), and Cao Zhi were active, along with the members of the literary salon to which Cao Pi gave the name "Seven Masters of the Jian'an" (*Jian'an qizi* 建安七子).

a few.[9] Though it may be invidious to compare Cutter's approach to theirs, rereading these other versions has helped me notice—what might otherwise have escaped me—that, as much as each translator differs from every other, Cutter stands in contrast to them all in the degree to which he is committed to strict adherence to the individual words of the original work on the one hand, and on the other to the consistent use of the plainest possible language in the translated text.

Below are examples showing the meticulous attention Cutter pays to detail in his treatment:

Examples of exact lexical equivalents include: "a startled swan-goose" for 驚鴻 (p. 61, l. 19); "hair ornaments of gold and kingfisher plumes" for 金翠之首飾 (p. 63, l. 51); "a colorful yak-tail pennant" for 采旄 (p. 65, l. 59); and "hidden thoroughwort" for 幽蘭 (p. 69, l. 112).

Examples abound of translated lines in which every single word of the original is accounted for and (to the extent allowed by English grammar) the structure of the original line is also replicated, such as:

> The carriage was in peril and the horses were tired 車殆馬煩 (p. 59, l. 8)
>
> My being was shaken and my spirit agitated 精移神駭 (p. 59, l. 13)
>
> She is as nebulous as the moon concealed in light clouds 仿佛兮若輕雲之蔽月
> Gracefully gliding, as snow spun by a flowing wind 飄颻兮若流風之回雪
> (p. 61, ll. 23–24)
>
> I passionately rejoice in her chaste beauty 余情悅其淑美兮 (p. 65, l. 63)
>
> Without a good matchmaker to unite us in pleasure 無良媒以接歡兮
> I trust to small wavelets to convey my words 托微波而通辭 (p. 65, ll. 65–66)
>
> The affection I hold is heartfelt and true 執眷眷之款實兮 (p. 65, l. 73)

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[9] David R. Knechtges, "Rhapsody on the Luo River Goddess," in his *Wen xuan or Selections of Refined Literature*, *Volume III: Rhapsodies on Natural Phenomena, Birds and Animals, Aspirations and Feelings, Sorrowful Laments, Literature, Music, and Passions* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1996), pp. 355–65; Paul W. Kroll, "Rhapsody on the Divinity of the Lo," in his "Seven Rhapsodies of Ts'ao Chih," *Journal of the American Oriental Society* 120.1 (2000): 9–12; Stephen Owen, "The Goddess of the Luo," in his *An Anthology of Chinese Literature: Beginnings to 1911* (New York: W. W. Norton and Company, 1996), pp. 194–97; Burton Watson, "The Goddess of the Lo," in his *Chinese Rhyme-Prose: Poems in the Fu Form from the Han and Six Dynasties Periods* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2015), pp. 66–73.

> She laments that our consummate union is forever finished 悼良會之永絕兮 (p. 71, l. 135)
>
> And [I] regret that the goddess has vanished and conceals her light 悵神宵而蔽光 (p. 71, l. 142)

In the first two lines quoted above (also in lines 44, 45, and 109), a line of four syllables made up of a pair of disyllabic compounds is translated into a line of two halves joined by the conjunction "and." Adding a conjunction to the translated line seems superfluous at first glance, when there is none in the original, but the two halves of the Chinese line are equal, and the coordinative conjunction in English brings the two halves of the translated line neatly into balance. It also slackens the rhythm of the line by a little. Looking over the rest of the examples, one sees that, by methodically rendering every word or phrase in the Chinese line into a more or less directly equivalent word or phrase, Cutter's treatment has the general effect of drawing the lines out in length and, cumulatively, slowing down the tempo of the poem as a whole. Here, in this encounter between the goddess and her lover, everything moves at a decidedly stately and dignified pace.

As for the goddess herself, differently interpreted by different translators, she is, like light, changeful, shimmering, and unstable—by turns ravishing and voluptuous (Owen and Watson) or majestic and serene (Knechtges and Kroll). Cutter's vision of this divine female beauty is by comparison more subdued, quieter in her movements, less vividly sensuous. For example, for 忽焉縱體，以遨以嬉 (p. 62, ll. 57–58), we have the following range of translations:

> All at once she broke loose, moving wild and free,
> she skipped and cavorted here and there (Owen, p. 195)
>
> Then suddenly she puts on a freer air,
> Ready for rambling, for pleasant diversion. (Watson, p. 69)
>
> Then, suddenly she moves light and easy,
> Rambling and playing about. (Knechtges, p. 361)
>
> And then
> Suddenly, there, she lets herself go,
> In order to ramble, in order to sport. (Kroll, p. 10)
>
> Thereupon,
> Suddenly she becomes less reserved,
> Thereby to ramble, thereby to frolic. (Cutter, p. 63)

Among the numerous sources for *zongti* 縱體 in line 57 that Cao Zhi may have had in mind are Zhang Heng's 張衡 (73–139) "*Fu* on the Western Capital" ("Xijing fu" 西京

賦)[10] and Chapter 11, "Integrating Customs" ("Qisuxun" 齊俗訓), in the *Huainanzi* 淮南子.[11] Depending on which of these is uppermost in the mind of the translator, *zongti* may be interpreted as describing dance-like moves that straddle the gamut from the elegant to the exotic. Cutter's is not the most conservative reading, but because it is expressed in negative terms (as compared to Kroll's "she lets herself go"), his translation holds the reader back from forming a sense of immediate physical presence. By saying she is "less reserved," Cutter paradoxically makes her seem more so, because she remains more of an abstraction.

Line 58, 以遨以嬉, is much more straightforward in provenance. This is line 6, 以遨以游, taken straight from "Cypress Boat" ("Bozhou" 柏舟, *Mao* 26) in the *Book of Songs* (*Shijing* 詩經), with the last word changed from *you* 游 to the synonymous *xi* 嬉 (both mean "to sport, to play") for the sake of the rhyme. In both lines, *yi* 以 functions as a preposition ("in order to"), which Cutter renders, very correctly, as "thereby." His translation, an exact replica of the original *Songs* line and Cao Zhi's derived line, preserves their archaic flavour. The effect is also to create a sense of formality and distance.

Elsewhere in the poem, the goddess "is versed in ritual and understands poetry" 羌習禮而明詩 (p. 65, l. 70),[12] while the poet "deploy[s] the strictures of propriety to contain [him]self" 申禮防以自持 (p. 65, l. 78). In the end, "[l]aying out the essential rule of intimate relations. / She regrets that the paths of humans and spirits are different" 陳交接之大綱，恨人神之道殊 (p. 71, ll. 130–31). The plain and deliberately explicit language Cutter uses to recreate these lines works, incrementally, to flatten the

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[10] "紛縱體而迅赴，若驚鶴之羣罷" in Xiao Tong 蕭統 (501–531), ed., *Wen xuan* 文選 (Hong Kong: Shangwu yinshuguan, 1936), 2.44, which David Knechtges translates as "All together, bodies relaxed, they quickened the tempo, / And returned just like a flock of cranes" (ll. 775–76) in his *Wen xuan* or *Selections of Fine Literature, Volume I: Rhapsodies on Metropolises and Capitals* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1982), p. 237.

[11] "胡、貉、匈奴之國，縱體拖髮，箕倨反言，而國不亡者，未必無禮也" in Zhang Shuangdi 張雙棣, ed. and annot., *Huainanzi jiaoshi* 淮南子校釋, 2nd ed. (Beijing: Beijing daxue chubanshe, 2013), p. 1165. The statement may be paraphrased as: "The tribes of the Hu, Mo, and Xiongnu leave their limbs unconstrained and wear their hair unbound, sit by crouching on their haunches and talk with their tongues flexed backward. Yet the fact that their states continue intact [shows that] they do not necessarily lack ritual [in their customs]."

[12] Alternatively, *li* 禮 and *shi* 詩 could mean canonical texts, such as the *Record of Rites* (*Liji* 禮記) and the *Book of Songs*, as noted by Cutter on p. 65, n. 1.

overall affect of the poem. Not only is the goddess, in this particular manifestation, a demure and modest being, and the poet as a lover more pensive than he is passionate; a faintly studied air pervades their entire encounter.[13]

Translations, by their nature as individual acts of interpretation, reveal different aspects of the original work. But just as the same piece of art, music, or literature affects us differently in different moods, translations too, being literary works in their own right, can vary in appeal depending on our mood and on the needs and preferences we call on them to meet. Cutter's translation of "*Fu* on the Goddess of the Luo River" is neither more nor less correct than the other versions mentioned in this review, only different. This leaves the reader free either to agree or to disagree with the style of translation it embodies and the interpretive insights it conveys. For my part, while I admire the flashes of brilliance to be found elsewhere, there is something that beguiles me in Cutter's intentionally understated conjuration of this famous poem.

A word, before moving on, regarding the literalness of Cutter's diction: A literal translation is often more precise, though not always more accurate, than translation in a freer form. For example, the line quoted earlier, "The carriage was in peril and the horses were tired," is, word for word, equivalent to the original line. However, although *dai* 殆 can mean "(to be) in peril,"[14] in the present context the carriage is in danger only of tipping over in precipitous terrain, so "unsteady"[15] would make a better fit here, in which case *fan* 煩 might be "balked,"[16] or "strained," rather than "tired."[17] In another of the above examples, the poet, for lack of a go-between to press his suit with the goddess, says: "I trust to small wavelets to convey my words" (p. 65, l. 66). For *weibo* 微波 , here

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[13] This reading is, I feel, supported by the text, which, in addition to "propriety" (alternatively, "the rites," used of both protagonists) and "essential rule" (alternatively, "unvarying principle"), also has "calm" or "composed" (*jing* 靜, used of both protagonists, in lines 44 and 77). Such a reading would be compatible with an allegorical interpretation of the poem in which the encounter with divinity symbolically expresses the poet's longing to be reconciled with the lord—the Emperor Wen 文帝, Cao Zhi's brother Cao Pi—from whom he has been estranged. However, Cutter is careful to avoid taking a position either for or against reading allegorical intent into Cao Zhi's poetry as a general rule.

[14] The *Shuowen jiezi* 說文解字 glosses *dai* as "(to be in) danger" (*wei ye* 危也). Jiang Renjie 蔣人傑, ed., *Shuowen jiezi jizhu* 說文解字集注 (Shanghai: Shanghai guji chubanshe, 1996), p. 819.

[15] Watson, "The Goddess of the Lo," p. 67.

[16] Owen, "The Goddess of the Luo," p. 194.

[17] This reading may be derived from a less common meaning of *dai*, "(to be) fatigued," as used in *Analects* 2.15: "子曰：學而不思則罔，思而不學則殆。"

rendered as "small wavelets," Owen has "soft glance-waves" (p. 195), looks of longing exchanged between lovers or would-be lovers. This is entirely appropriate, because in Chinese "waves" are just as likely to be used in a figurative sense as in a literal one. But, by making a direct translation, Cutter keeps both possibilities in play, giving readers a mild frisson of excitement as the imagination hovers momentarily between "small wavelets" of light darting from the eyes and little ripples skimming across the surface of the water. There is thus a case to be made both for and against the literal approach to translation.

As important as the *fu* was to Cao Zhi, and as creative as he was in working with this time-honoured form, it was in the newer and more experimental forms of *shi* and *yuefu* in pentasyllabic metre that he achieved the greatest distinction.[18] But we have only begun, in recent years, to understand just how new and unstable pentasyllabic poetry was as an art form when Cao Zhi came to it and in what ways he helped to give shape and direction to its development with his own experiments.

Among modern readers, most of whom know the Chinese literary tradition as a series of unconnected snippets, there is a strong temptation to see Cao Zhi as the first poet, or one of the first poets, to express intensely personal thoughts and emotions in his poetry and to speak in a voice of his own, that is, a voice that can readily be identified with the poet himself. Certainly, coming as he does in the typical schoolbook

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[18] *Fu*, the poetic form embodying the political and cultural authority of the Han, was past its heyday by the time Cao Cao was on the rise, but it had by no means ceased to be accounted a major literary genre. Moreover, its usefulness as a source of legitimating power would not have been lost on the Cao family, self-appointed heirs to the Han imperial order. As a prince who at one time had strong hopes of the succession, Cao Zhi would have been aware of the significance of composing in this form. This much we do know: Cao Zhi at one point put together a carefully edited collection of his own youthful compositions in the *fu* form, to which he gave the title "Earlier Record" (*Qian lu* 前錄), perhaps an abbreviated form of "record of earlier writings." Of this, only a short preface survives. See Ding, *Cao ji quanping*, p. 143; also Cutter, *The Poetry of Cao Zhi*, pp. xxxv–xxxvi. As Cao Zhi explains in the preface, the seventy-eight pieces in this collection were culled from a much larger number that his now more discerning self felt to be "overgrown with weeds" (*wuhui* 蕪穢) and in need of "cutting and revising" (*shanding* 刪定). I take this use of "wuhui" (appropriately derived from the "Li Sao" 離騷, the progenitor of the *fu*), which Cutter renders as "turgid," to mean "overwritten" in the sense of being excessively ornate or elaborate, a common failing in young authors. The collection would have been intended for presentation, presumably at court, a measure of the social status and political function still invested in the *fu* as well as of its importance to Cao Zhi as a means of constructing his public identity.

reader—behind a handful of folk-songs from the "Airs" 國風 section of the *Book of Songs* and a sundry assortment of poems of anonymous origin vaguely attributed to the Han dynasty and similar ones equally vaguely attributed to two Han-dynasty personages named Li Ling 李陵 (d. 74 B.C.E.) and Su Wu 蘇武 (*c.* 140–60 B.C.E.)—Cao Zhi makes an arresting figure, appearing to us, by sheer contrast, as a distinct individual, and his poems as though vibrantly imbued with the personality of the poet. Just how much this perception of the "personal" and the "individual" in Cao Zhi's poetry owes to habits of reading formed many centuries later, as the mid-Northern Song 北宋 (960–1127) elite reconfigured the canon of great poets to accommodate Du Fu 杜甫 (712–770) into its uppermost echelon, becomes clear once we take a closer look at Cao Zhi in the context of his forebears, contemporaries, and immediate posterity.

For the poets of the Jian'an era, new poems in the five-syllable form were made, not from whole cloth, but from reworking and incorporating pre-existing material of other origin into material of one's own making, or assimilating one's own material into pre-existing material.[19] Poems composed in this fashion, by literally putting them together, may be read as expressing, not "personal" thoughts and emotions in the way that we now understand this word, but rather sentiments of a general nature with which the poet resonates and harmonizes in the act of composition. Likewise, the voice we hear in these poems is as much a generic voice, appropriate to the theme of a particular piece, as it is the "individual" voice of the poet.

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[19] A good deal of this pre-existing material would have come from a possibly immense body of poetry of popular origin circulating among the elite at this time, of which a small number—the anonymous poems and poems in the Li Ling–Su Wu complex mentioned above—are preserved in the *Wen xuan* and *Yutai xinyong*. Stephen Owen has worked out a compelling reconstruction of a creative process that consists essentially of the elite cannibalization of popular poetry, a process in which the lexicon of the assimilated material is translated, at first serendipitously and later systematically, from a lower to a higher register. Although an early date was commonly ascribed to this popular poetry by sixth-century anthologists—both the *Wen xuan* and the *Yutai xinyong* classify the anonymous poems as "ancient" (*gushi* 古詩), and Zhong Rong 鍾嶸 (fl. 502–518), in his *Gradings of Poetry* 詩品, mentions seeing fifty-nine "ancient poems" (of which forty-five probably do not overlap with the nineteen preserved in the *Wen xuan*)—Owen argues there is nothing to prove that poems of this kind were not in fact of recent provenance during the early medieval period. See his *The Making of Early Chinese Classical Poetry*, pp. 38 et seq. Speaking purely from the viewpoint of the psychology of artistic borrowing, it may indeed be more plausible to conjecture that the resource elite poets were drawing upon with so much enthusiasm should belong to a time close to themselves rather than to the distant past.

Cutter shows a strong awareness of literary history in his recreations of the *shi* and *yuefu* in Cao Zhi's collection. By adhering strictly to literal translation and maintaining a tight hand on the deployment of vocabulary, he keeps individualizing elements in any given poem to a minimum. The result is to throw greater emphasis on the generic nature of many aspects of Cao Zhi's compositions, from the lexical to the thematic, and so give a more historically informed sense of his creative process as a delicate balance of innovation with assimilation. This is an excellent corrective to the kind of anachronistic reading that would make Cao Zhi too much of a romantic figure, by turns a dashing cavalier and a man haunted by melancholy.

Cutter's restrained and muted approach is everywhere evident in the sections on *shi* and *yuefu*; here, in this reviewer's opinion, are some of the most noteworthy ones: "Lord's Feast" ("Gongyan" 公宴, 4.1); "Unclassified Poem, No. 3" ("Zashi qisan" 雜詩其三, 4.8); "Presented to Xu Gan" ("Zeng Xu Gan" 贈徐幹, 4.16); "Three Good Men" ("San liang" 三良, 4.26); "Love Poem" ("Qing shi" 情詩, 4.28); "Ballad of the Sparrow in the Field" ("Yetian huangque xing" 野田黃雀行, 5.2); "Seven Sorrows" ("Qi ai" 七哀, 5.3); "White Horse" ("Baima pian" 白馬篇, 5.10); "Famous Cities ("Mingdu pian" 名都篇, 5.11); "Liangfu Ballad" ("Liangfu xing" 梁甫行, 5.19); "Vermilion Clouds Hide the Sun" ("Danxia biri xing" 丹霞蔽日行, 5.20); "Great Hardship in Days Past, A Variation" ("Dang lairi danan" 當來日大難, 5.23); "Painful Thoughts" ("Kusi xing" 苦思行, 5.26); and "The Rejected Wife" ("Qifu pian" 棄婦篇, 5.47).[20]

Judiciously applied, Cutter's method produces limpidly clean and simple versions through which the original poems can shine. Yet any manner of approaching a text, if it is followed too single-mindedly, can have unlooked-for effects, and when Cutter, in the interests of precision, translates word for word, the results can occasionally be infelicitous. For example, *bainian* 百年, literally, "one hundred years," appears twice in Cao Zhi's extant corpus. The first instance is to be found in "Presented to Biao, Prince of Baima" ("Zeng Baimawang Biao" 贈白馬王彪, 4.20), justly the best known of Cao Zhi's poems in the *shi* form. The other, in "Harp Lay" ("Konghou yin" 箜篌引, 5.1), occurs in the couplet 盛時不可再，百年忽我遒, which Cutter renders as "The prime of life does not come twice, / Within a century we suddenly come to an end" (p. 217,

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[20] 5.20 and 5.23 are examples of poems in tetrasyllabic metre, of which Cao Zhi has a fair number and which Cutter is exceptionally good at recreating in English. Regarding the title of 5.26, I would like to suggest that *ku* should not be read as "painful" (or "bitter," as it is rendered elsewhere), but rather as an intensifying modifier, and that we also take *si* in the sense of the deeply focused activity of the mind cultivated by Daoist adepts and, in the *Analects*, by Yan Hui 顏回, the most mystical of Confucius's disciples. In that case *kusi* would be something like "concentrated thoughts," "deep reflections," or "intense meditations."

ll. 19–20). The juxtaposition, in the second line of the couplet, between a lifespan of a century and a sudden end seems incongruous, because dying within a century of one's birth cannot be reckoned as either swift or sudden. But supposing, instead of reading *you* 遒 as "to come to an end" (*jin ye* 盡也), we were to take it as meaning "to draw near" (*po ye* 迫也) or "to press upon" (*bi ye* 逼也),[21] with *hu wo you* 忽我遒 as an inversion of *hu you wo* 忽遒我,[22] and, again, if we also took *bainian* as a euphemism, as it sometimes is, for the end of life: the couplet can then be paraphrased as "The prime of life can never be repeated, / And death comes suddenly upon us." This may be more in keeping with the kind of proverbial wisdom about the brevity of life that Cao Zhi and his contemporaries were in the habit of quoting or adapting from their shared source material.

In making a literal translation, if one focuses too tightly on the words within a given line, without considering the line in the larger context of the poem, this can have the effect of obscuring, rather than elucidating, the meaning of the individual line and perhaps even impact the reading of the entire poem. For example, the *yuefu* poem titled "Boulder" ("Panshi pian" 盤石篇, 5.40) ends with the couplet 乘槎何所志，吁嗟我孔公, which Cutter renders as "What is the purpose of riding a raft? / Alas, Master Confucius!" (p. 285, ll. 31–32) Interestingly, in an earlier version of this translation, Cutter has "Riding a raft, where would one mean to go? / Alas, our Confucius!"[23] This earlier version is much freer than the one in the book, but I would argue that it makes a closer approximation of the semantic content of the original precisely because it is less close to the actual words themselves.

It may seem like splitting hairs to look for fine nuances in the way a couplet, a line, or even a phrase is rendered. But for the general reader of a book of translations, who lacks the contextualizing perspectives afforded by knowledge of cultural and literary history, the difference between understanding and incomprehension may lie in something as seemingly trivial as the turning of a phrase.

"Boulder" is a poem on the theme of distant roaming. The poet embarks on a fabulous journey that takes him across unbounded oceans and then, growing suddenly weary and heart-sick for home, he longs to chart a course for return while at the same time feeling stymied in his hopes of ever returning. The movements traced

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[21] Jiang, *Shuowen jiezi jizhu*, p. 360.

[22] When a sentence ends in a personal pronoun that is the object of a verb, the pronoun is usually preposed in front of the verb.

[23] Robert Joe Cutter, "Cao Zhi (192–232) and His Poetry"(Ph.D. diss., University of Washington, 1983), p. 239. In *Analects* 5.7, Confucius says that, should the Way not prevail, he might put to sea in a raft.

in this way repeat a familiar pattern, one that goes as far back as the poetic quests of the *Chu ci* 楚辭 anthology. To this, Cao Zhi gives a fresh twist by adding a coda in the form of the couplet quoted above, in which he gestures, ever so lightly, toward the iconic *Analects* passage about Confucius putting to sea in a raft.

The question posed in the first line of the final couplet is clearly rhetorical, although it is unclear whether this is directed at the poet himself or at Confucius, or whether it conflates the two, in which case the line might be clumsily paraphrased as "If, like you, I were to set sail on a raft, where could I set my mind on going?" The exclamation in the couplet's second line ("Alas, our Master Kong!") is likewise rhetorical, although here too it is unclear whether, in apostrophizing Confucius, the poet is lamenting Confucius's predicament, or calling on Confucius to witness his own, or both at once. Thus, at the poem's end, as the poet comes to a stop on his journey, we see, momentarily superimposed over this, Confucius coming to a standstill in the pursuit of the Way,[24] while the visionary seas the poet has just been crossing resolve into an image of the ocean on which Confucius is about to set sail—all coalescing together in a single couplet of ten syllables.

Poetic grammar was at this time still at a rudimentary stage of development—the more sophisticated forms of parataxis and inversion having yet to be discovered—but the grammar of literary Chinese is by its nature so permissive, so fluid and flexible in structure, that even in early poetry it is often possible to keep several different readings simultaneously in play. The closing couplet of "Boulder" is a good example of this. Unfortunately, English grammar is far less forgiving, and the translator, constrained by its strictures to choose one among a number of competing interpretations, has perforce to sacrifice the rest. Nonetheless, Cutter is successful in capturing something of the expansive ambiguity of the original in his first version of this couplet: "Riding in a raft, where would one mean to go? / Alas, our Confucius!" Even though, without a lengthy explanation, the English reader cannot be expected to grasp the significance of the *Analects* reference, the rhetoric of the couplet is immediately apparent: the poet is asking a question to which he despairs of getting an answer, or rather, to which the only answer is a cry of desolation. Reading the version in this book—"What is the purpose of riding a raft? / Alas, Master Confucius!"—one is uncertain of the connection between the two lines. The question, asked in this way, sounds open-ended and genuinely in want of a reply, to which the despairing invocation of Confucius's name comes across as a non sequitur. By keeping too close to the actual words, Cutter's new translation has uncoupled the link between the two constituent lines of the couplet, leaving the reader in bafflement.

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[24] In *Analects* 5.7, the phrase *dao bu xing* 道不行, sometimes translated as "the Way does not prevail," is, more literally, "the Way does not go forward."

Similarly, in "Presented to Ding Yi" ("Zeng Ding Yi" 贈丁廙 , 4.21),[25] the couplet 積善有餘慶，榮枯立可須 has been rendered as "Amassing good deeds brings a surfeit of blessings, / Through ups and downs one can stand by and wait" (p. 183, ll. 15–16). Here too the English reader finds it difficult to tell how the two lines that make up the couplet are related, or if they are related at all. However, Cutter has two other versions of this, one in an article (1984), "By amassing good deeds one has blessings to spare, / And changes in fortune can be awaited any time,"[26] and one in his dissertation (1983), "Whoever does good works has blessings for posterity, / And right away may await his success."[27] Once again, there is a marked progression from comparatively free translation in the earliest version to strictly literal translation in the latest, or to put it the other way around, the farther back we go, the freer the translation, and the clearer the connection between the two halves of the couplet. For this reason, the earliest and freest version is, in this reviewer's opinion, the one that comes closest to what the words, taken together, actually mean, even though it is the farthest from matching what the individual words seem to be saying.[28]

More than poetry in perhaps any other language (with the possible exception of English poetry in the age of Pope), classical Chinese poetry in the *shi* form is built around the couplet. But long before Shen Yue's 沈約 (441–513) experiments in

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[25] Cao Zhi addressed poems to two brothers whose names, as pronounced in modern Mandarin Chinese, are both Ding Yi. This is the younger of the two. Of the poems addressed to the elder brother, one is discussed later in this review.

[26] Robert Joe Cutter, "Cao Zhi's (192–232) Symposium Poems," *Chinese Literature: Essays, Articles, Reviews (CLEAR)* 6.1/2 (1984): 16. "Symposium poems" is Cutter's delightful term for poems exchanged with other individuals (*zengda shi* 贈答詩), which are strongly represented in the core group of poetic writings in Cao Zhi's collection.

[27] Cutter, "Cao Zhi (192–232) and His Poetry," p. 86.

[28] The first line of the couplet is a quotation, in contracted form, of this line from the *Book of Changes*: "The family that accumulates good deeds is sure to have a superabundance of blessings" (*jishan zhi jia biyou yuqing* 積善之家，必有餘慶). Gao Heng 高亨, ed. and annot., *Zhou Yi gujing jinzhu* 周易古經今注, rev. ed. (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1984), p. 166. In the second line, the compound word *rongku* 榮枯 means, variously, "flourishing and decay," "rise and fall," or "success and failure," but as is often the case with compound words made up of oppositional pairs, only one word in the pair, here *rong*, is meaningful, while the meaning of the other, here *ku*, is suppressed. Cutter makes a note on this phenomenon of semantically biassed word combinations in Chinese in his dissertation (p. 153, n. 86). *Li ke xu* 立可須 (須 standing for the less common variant graph 顓, "to wait") is a contraction of *ke li er dai* 可立而待 (substituting *xu* for *dai* for the sake of the rhyme),"to be awaited while

(*Continued on next page*)

tonal prosody[29] inducted Chinese poets into their centuries-long *affaire de coeur* with couplet-crafting, Cao Zhi was already using the couplet, in ways novel at the time, to structure meaning in his poems. If one thinks of the couplet as the basic unit of composition, the lines making up its two halves are not merely sequential, they interact one with the other to produce the meaning of the couplet as a whole. The way one reads the first line in the couplet delimits the ways in which the second line is read, but the reading of the second line can also revise and recondition the way in which one has read the first line. "Amassing good deeds brings a surfeit of blessings" is mere bromide until we read on and see "One can anticipate success right away" (my slightly modified paraphrase of Cutter). Taken together, the two lines make a conditional statement, "If it is true that to amass good deeds brings a surfeit of blessings, then one should be able to anticipate success right away," or a statement propounding cause and effect, "Since amassing good deeds brings a surfeit of blessings, one can anticipate success right away." As yet little more than a cliché, but now the cliché contains the germ of an idea. But let us see what happens when we read this couplet within the sequence in which it occurs.

The recipient of this poem, Ding Yi, and his older brother Ding Yi 丁儀, were close associates of Cao Zhi who actively supported him in his hopes of becoming Cao Cao's heir; Cao Pi had them killed when he took the throne.[30] The poem begins as a feasting song and then, pivoting at midpoint on the couplet "Why would I mingle with strangers? / Intimate friends are together with me" 我豈狎異人，朋友與我俱 (p. 181, ll. 9–10), the poet appears to launch into an excursus contrasting the conduct of a "gentleman" (*junzi* 君子) with that of "lesser men" (*xiaoren* 小人), essentially paraphrasing, in the elevated language fashionable among elite poets at the time, passages on this topic taken from different parts of the *Analects*.

Perhaps Cao Zhi is simply taking this occasion to extol his friend as a gentleman, while exhorting him to cleave to the path of gentlemanly conduct, throughout the second half of the poem. But then I wonder why he should, exactly in the middle

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(Note 28—*Continued*)

standing up," that is, "imminently to be expected." Parsed in this way, the couplet may be paraphrased, in a slight modification of Cutter's earliest and most lively version, "He who does good works will have blessings to spare, / And so right away may anticipate success."

[29] Hongming Zhang makes an excellent summary of important scholarship on Shen Yue's role in the creation of tonal prosody before presenting his own views on the contributions he believes Shen Yue to have made. See his "On the Origin of Chinese Tonal Prosody: Argumentation from a Case Study of Shen Yue's Poems," *Journal of Chinese Literature and Culture* 2.2 (2015): 347–79.

[30] Chen Shou 陳壽 (233–297), *San guo zhi* 三國志 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 1959), pp. 557, 561.

of the poem's second half, interject a couplet (ll. 15–16) that, by drawing a causal connection between deed and consequence, cites a completely different kind of wisdom. According to the *Analects*, one distinctive trait that sets the gentleman apart from the lesser man is detachment, expressed as lack of self-regard and unconcern with worldly success: the gentleman does good for its own sake with no thought of material outcomes. Yet here the poet pauses in mid-spate to tell his friend, in no uncertain terms, to expect good returns on his good works—and that right soon.

It is not at all unusual for an early medieval poet, with the example of poems like (what were later called) the "Nineteen Old Poems" 古詩十九首 before him, to transition in the middle of a feasting song into a series of moral or philosophical reflections. Reading this particular couplet in the way I have suggested would, however, make it stand out conspicuously from the section in which it is embedded. Whereas the rest seems to be straightforward homily of a general nature, here the poet is making a concrete promise. Grammatical fluidity in the original Chinese leaves it ambiguous as to whether the one doing good works is also the one awaiting a good outcome, but however amorphous the grammar of the couplet, the sentiment is clear: Success is at hand.

Even as one who refuses to subscribe to the school of thought that seeks systematically to find references in Cao Zhi's poetry to events in his life, I find it difficult to account for this anomalous couplet without seeing encoded in it a reference of this kind, in this case to the Ding brothers' advocacy of Cao Zhi as a candidate for the succession. To Ding Yi the younger, who has already committed so much effort to advance Cao Zhi's cause, the poet urges that he hold firm and stay the course,[31] like the gentleman he is, because their hour of triumph is near. Absent this reading, the poem, filled with dynamic movement in the first half, seems to lose momentum and coherence in the second; read in this way, the couplet pulls the poem together,

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[31] Page 183, line 17, which Cutter translates as "Magnanimously hold to what's most important" (*taodang gu dajie* 滔蕩固大節), is a creative reworking of two *Analects* passages on the topic of the contrast in behaviour between the gentleman and the lesser man: (1) The descriptive modifier *taodang* references *tan dangdang* in *Analects* 7.37, "The gentleman is calm and at ease; the lesser man is in a constant state of anxiety" (*junzi tan dangdang, xiaoren chang qiqi* 君子坦蕩蕩，小人長戚戚); (2) the verb phrase *gu da jie* references *gu qiong* in *Analects* 15. 2, "The gentleman holds firm in adversity; the lesser man in adversity goes all to pieces" (*junzi gu qiong, xiaoren qiong si lan yi* 君子固窮，小人窮斯濫矣). *Jie* (as in *da jie*, which Cutter renders as "what's most important") can mean, in different contexts, "principle" or "integrity" but also "an event," especially an event on which hinges an important outcome.

(*Continued on next page*)

giving point and focus, and a sense of quickening urgency, to what would otherwise be little more than a string of conventional blandishments to moral behaviour, however eloquently articulated.

In a poem like "Presented to Ding Yi (the younger)," where one must commit to a specific reading in order to make sense of the whole, translating the words in such a way as to keep open the possibility for multiple interpretations, laudable as this may be in principle, is not, I feel, in the best service of the non-specialist reader. The same may be said of another of the symposium poems, this one dedicated to Ding Yi the elder, "Presented to Ding Yi" ("Zeng Ding Yi" 贈丁儀 , 4.17). To this reviewer's mind, the meaning of the poem as a whole turns on how we read the final couplet, 子其寧爾心，親交義不薄 , which Cutter renders as "You may set your mind at rest: / Your close friend's loyalty is undiminished" (p. 169, ll. 15–16), and especially on how we read the word *yi* 義 , here "loyalty," in the middle of the last line.

Yi is one of those maddening omnibus words in Chinese that seem designed to thwart the translator's best efforts, because not only is it impossible to find one uniformly applicable equivalent to cover every one of its meanings, even attempts to translate only one of its meanings, as particularized by context, can ever only be partially successful in capturing all the nuances in that one particular meaning. Cutter's solutions for *yi* in its many occurrences include: "righteousness" (1.4 "*Fu* on Communicating with the Mysterious" 玄暢賦 , p. 9, l. 3; 1.11 "*Fu* on Focusing the Will" 潛志賦 , p. 29, l. 5), "rectitude" (1.8 "*Fu* on Thoughts on Parting" 離思賦 , p. 23, l. 39), "bonds" (1.9 "*Fu* on Relieving Troubled Thoughts" 釋思賦 , p. 25, l. 3, as in the bonds between siblings), "principles" (1.17 "*Fu* on Entertaining Guests" 娛賓賦 , p. 41, l. 11; 5.15 "The Beautiful Woman" 美女篇 , p. 243, l. 25, occurring in the compound "lofty principles," *gaoyi* 高義), "duty" (4.16 "Presented to Xu Gan" 贈徐幹 , p. 167, l. 27), "decency" (4.21 "Presented to Ding Yi," 贈丁廙 , p. 181, l. 13), and "dutifulness" (5.45 "Essential Subtlety Song" 精微篇 , three occurrences, p. 307, ll. 27, 29; p. 309, l. 49). Amid this welter of usages, "loyalty" does not appear to be out of place. But there may be another word or phrase that can, more effectively, illuminate the specific facet of this multifaceted word that is being brought into play in this poem.

At the heart of the above translations of *yi* lies the concept of something that is due, or owing, vis-à-vis a person, or of what is right, in the sense of appropriate or necessary, in a situation. *Yi* is thus a duty or obligation, as well as a sense of duty and obligation, hence righteousness, rectitude, and both moral principle and the quality

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(Note 31—*Continued*)

If we accept my interpretation of lines 15 and 16, the recontextualized line 17 may be read as accommodating a more pointed meaning—"Be easy of mind as you hold fast to the great event [that will soon come to pass]"—into the generalized bit of advice reflected in Cutter's translation.

of having moral principles. In a situation or a relationship, it is also the bond, or rather the etiquette—social, moral, and ethical—governing the bond between people, which may be expressed as anything from loyalty to filial and fraternal feeling to friendship. But, unlike these English words, the *yi* that governs how two people behave to each other, irrespective of the particular nature of their relationship, refers to both an abstract code and a concrete object—both the consciousness of owing and the thing itself that is owed.

"Presented to Ding Yi (the elder)" is a meditation on "early autumn"[32] that, by a process of association across related themes, moves from contemplation of a physical landscape in decay to concern for the hardships of the farmer to pity for the suffering of the destitute in winter. At this point, the poet declares, in my paraphrase: "Those ensconced in the privilege of nobility readily forget those of humble estate, reasoning that, in bestowing favour, no one can be all-embracing; when such men have white fox furs enough to ward off the winter cold, why should they remember strangers lacking for clothes?" 在貴多忘賤，為恩誰能博？狐白足禦冬，焉念無衣客？ (p. 166, ll. 9–12)[33] Then comes the "turn," as the poet goes on to state that, unlike these men, he models himself on Yanlingzi 延陵子, who fulfilled an unspoken pledge he had once made to a man, even though the man's death freed him from any obligation to do so.[34] This is why, the poet concludes, Ding Yi should rest easy in his mind, because (again in my paraphrase), "Your close friend will not be stinting in what is due."

In the last line of the poem, where Cutter has "loyalty," I have rendered *yi* as "what is due." Loyalty is indisputably a vital constitutive element of friendship, and one that, between true friends, cannot "wear thin" or "grow cold" (*bo* 薄) and hence will always remain "undiminished." Cutter's translation is beautiful; it also makes a fitting coda to a poem dedicated to a friend. But if we were to interpret the word *yi* in its more basic sense of "what is due" (a sense that encompasses both the consciousness of owing and the thing that is owed), this would, I feel, put the final couplet into closer relationship with the foregoing section (pp. 166–68, ll. 9–14), making it possible to see it not as a coda but as an integral part of the body of the poem. And by thus re-embedding

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[32] *Chuqiu* 初秋 (p. 166, l. 1), the first two characters in the poem, indicate the first month of autumn.

[33] Taking *en* 恩 as "favour," as opposed to "charity" (Cutter, p. 167, l. 10), because "favour" puts giver and giftee in a relationship of obligation, whereas "charity" does not necessarily imply a relationship. I also differ from Cutter in reading these four lines as an argument the poet puts forth solely in order that he may strongly refute it.

[34] Yanlingzi is Cao Zhi's way of referring to a prince named Ji Zha 季札, the youngest son of the king of the ancient state of Wu 吳 in the sixth century B.C.E. Yanling was the place to which he was enfeoffed. See Cutter, p. 169, n. 1.

the final couplet more tightly into the poem's structure, we would initiate a process of rereading and revising that, as I suggested earlier, complicates but also completes the meaning of the poem as a whole.

For example, line 9 (*zai gui duo wang jian* 在貴多忘賤), which Cutter succinctly renders as "The noble mostly forget the lowly" (p. 167, l. 9), becomes complicated in a number of ways when we read it again in the context of "what is due," with effects that run over into the lines that follow. This is because, more than the sad truth that the fortunate too often "forget" the plight of the unfortunate (in the sense of paying them too little regard), the poet is also saying that the privileged too often "forget" the bond of *noblesse oblige* uniting them with those without privilege (in the sense of being too ready to dismiss it out of hand); this is why such men can bring themselves, even in the deepest cold of winter, to turn away the needy poor as "strangers" (*ke* 客). But the poet is also saying that there are men who, having arrived at high estate and are now comfortably ensconced (*zai gui*), are too often ready to forget their once lowly station; this is why such men can bring themselves to equivocate, "in granting favour no one can encompass all" (*wei en shei neng bo* 為恩誰能博), and in this way exculpate themselves from remembering, and suitably rewarding, all who have helped them into the position they now occupy.

Cao Zhi is different, however, from these moral renegades. In lines 13 and 14, he cites the story of Yanlingzi, who, passing through a little state on a diplomatic mission, saw that the ruler desired his sword and made up his mind to offer it on his way back, but by this time, the ruler had died. Yanlingzi, unable to persuade the new ruler to accept the sword on his predecessor's behalf, nonetheless hung the sword over the dead man's tomb, thus making good on his tacit promise to grant a favour that had never even been sought. For this reason, knowing that Cao Zhi espouses an example of giving where nothing is owed, Ding Yi can rest assured that, between close friends, what is owed will be unstintingly given.[35]

As with the poem dedicated to the other Ding Yi, "Presented to Ding Yi (the elder)" does not need to be connected with Cao Zhi's biography in order to make sense, but seems to make better sense if a connection is inferred. The two poems,

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[35] Cao Zhi seems to have got the story about Ji Zha from the chapter on "Men of Integrity" ("Jieshi" 節士) in the collection, *New Prefaces* (*Xinxu* 新序), compiled by the Western Han (206 B.C.E.–9 C.E.) bibliographer, Liu Xiang 劉向 (77–6 B.C.E.). Shi Guangying 石光瑛, ed. and annot., *Xinxu jiaoshi* 新序校釋 (Beijing: Zhonghua shuju, 2001), pp. 867–69. His choice of Ji Zha as an exemplar is a little puzzling—the generous giver is a popular type in Chinese cultural narratives—until we remember that Ji Zha was an enlightened prince who stood loftily above the power struggles surrounding the succession in his state.

so dissimilar in tone, are alike in that both gain focus and coherence if we allow ourselves to assume that Cao Zhi is referring to something that is understood and agreed upon between him and the recipients. To the older brother, Cao Zhi addresses a poem that begins as a meditation on a sombre landscape in autumn and ends on an assurance given in a mood of serene and almost regal self-possession; the poem to the younger brother, compounded of feasting song and moral platitude in equal halves, renders an assurance that, despite being couched in a tone of bullish confidence—or perhaps because of it—comes off considerably edgier instead. Without knowing more about when and in what circumstances the two poems were composed, there is no way to account for the difference between them. But it is not within the translator's brief to guess at the reasons why they are different, only to find ways of rendering the words so as to bring out that difference more clearly.

In the discussion above, I have used examples from three poems to show that, although Cutter's strictly literal approach to translation is by and large effective, good results can sometimes be produced by supplementing this with another mode of interpretation that seeks to embed the individual words, phrases, and lines back into the context of the whole piece. I do not mean, by saying this, to cavil at a methodology that appears to have been developed over a long period of thoughtful study and that has now been applied, with genuine scholarly rigour, to the translations in this book. Speaking for myself, I would not have seen the fine nuances to which I drew attention in the above discussion if Cutter's neatly detailed work had not opened my mind to these other possibilities. If, like me, readers at large come to a better understanding of Cao Zhi's poetic achievement through these translations, Professor Cutter will have been of inestimable service, not only to students and lovers of Chinese literature, but also, by helping one of China's great poets to find a place in the literary pantheon of the world, to Cao Zhi himself.

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